N° 15

A

SERMON

PREACHED at the
Prebendal Church of *Ailesbury*,
IN THE
County of *BUCKS*,
March the 2d. 1724.
AT THE
ASSIZES Held at *Ailesbury*,
Before the HONOURABLE
Mr. Juſtice *POWIS*.

Publiſhed at the Requeſt of Mr. HIGH-SHERIFF,
and the Gentlemen of the GRAND-JURY.

By ALEX. BURRELL, M. A.
And Rector of *Adſtock*, in the County of *Bucks*.

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G.R. III.

TO

RICHARD SMITH, Esq;

HIGH-SHERIFF

OF THE

County of *BUCKS*,

And to the

Gentlemen of the GRAND-JURY.

GENTLEMEN,

I *Have comply'd with your Requeſt, in publiſhing this Diſcourſe, which I entertain'd you with at the laſt Aſſizes held at* Ailesbury. *Before I preach'd it, I conſider'd, what was the main Buſineſs of the Day, and, to avoid the Cenſure of being too prolix, I think I have run into the contrary Extreme. As I could not but take Notice*

Notice of the ſerious Attention, that you were pleaſed to give me, whilſt I was delivering this Sermon to you; ſo, I am encourag'd to believe, that you will now comply with this my honeſt Requeſt to you, viz. *That you will make it the conſtant Rule of your Proceedings between Man and Man: And, as many of you are Magiſtrates of this County, ſo I pleaſe my ſelf with Hopes, that not only my ſelf, but all my Neighbours, will continue to reap the Benefits of the due Adminiſtration of Juſtice from you; and that, by your daily Practice in your reſpective Stations, you will Inlarge upon that Duty, which I had only Time to Epitomize. I am,*

GENTLEMEN,

Your moſt Obedient,

Humble Servant,

Alexander Burrell.

A

SERMON

PREACHED at the

Aſſizes Held at *Ailesbury.*

MICAH vi. 8.

He hath ſhewed thee, O Man, what is Good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly? ——

THO' Men may ſometimes pleaſe themſelves with ſearching into the Curioſities of Nature, and take Delight in airy Notions, yet theſe are not the Things, wherein true Happineſs does conſiſt, neither can Men attain unto it merely

by Speculation. Tho' they ſearch into Myſteries, and apprehend ſomething of thoſe glorious Truths, which God is pleas'd to manifeſt, yet if they form not the Soul into that Divine Love, and Charity, 'tis but as the † *ſounding Braſs*, or *tinkling Cymbal*. As Men may behold the Light of the Sun, and admire the Beauty, and Strength of that mighty Giant, who runs his Courſe with indefatigable Motion, yet if they receive nothing of his Heat, and Influence, it little avails to their Benefit, or Satisfaction; So when Men take a View of the Excellency of Religion, and admire thoſe glorious Truths, which ſpread their Rays with incomparable Beauty; yet if they warm not our frozen Souls, and make them pliant to receive the Divine Image, they rather increaſe our Miſery, than conduce to our Comfort. For Religion is not manifeſted for this Reaſon, That it ſhould only be known; but that it ſhould be put into Practice; not only to raiſe our Admiration, and Wonder, but to quicken

† 1 Cor. xiii. 1.

our

our Love, and Devotion; not only to have ſome wandering Speculations, but to * *taſte, and ſee, how good the Lord is.* For Knowledge, or Science, are but vain and empty Things, when their ultimate End is knowing; but they are then ennobled, when they are made practicable. And *that* Knowledge of God, of his Mercy and Power, Juſtice and Wiſdom, is the trueſt, and beſt, which kindles in our Hearts devout Affections; not *that*, which is wrought by the Labour, and Sweat of our Brows. When the Conſideration of God's miraculous Love, and Patience does form our Souls to ſome Reſemblance of his pure, and immaculate Nature; when it creates in us ſome Reflections in Obedience, and Holy Living; our Knowledge then produces ſuch Fruits, as demonſtrate its Worth, and Value.

God Almighty, in Compaſſion to our Infirmities, has ſhewed us, what is his Will, what we ſhould practiſe, which is the beſt Sacrifice, and the ſweeteſt Incenſe, moſt grateful to him. He delights not in

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* Pſal. xxxiv. 8.

Hecatombs, or the richeſt Holocauſts, not in Ten Thouſand Rivers of Oyl, or Ten Thouſand Rams: He requires not our Imitation of *Abraham*, to lay our *Iſaac* upon the Altar, but to devote our Hearts to him, the Searcher of them. *He hath ſhewed thee, O Man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly?* —

This Chapter, in the preceding Part of it, is a Re-capitulation, or ſumming up of thoſe Mercies, which the People of *Iſrael* had received from the Hand of God, occaſioned from their Revolt, and Unkindneſs; and therefore God is pleas'd, as it were, to enter into a Controverſy with them, pleading his own Mercies, and upbraiding their Ingratitude; That notwithſtanding all thoſe Remarkable Paſſages of his Providence over them, they baſely turned a diſobedient People. And here the Prophet, by a certain Figure, perſonates the People, ſpeaking at the Sixth Verſe, *Wherewith ſhall I come before the Lord, and bow my ſelf before the High God?* What Offering is moſt acceptable? Whether Thouſands of Rams, or the Cattle upon a Thouſand Hills? To which the Prophet returns

returns this Anſwer, If you enquire for this, *He hath ſhewed thee, O Man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly?* ——

The former Part of this Verſe is as a Preface to the Duties, contained in the latter Part of it; and I might here take Notice of the lovely Object, *Good*, the Centre of our Happineſs, and the End of all our Deſires: I might next ſhew you the ſeveral Ways, that God has been pleaſed, out of his infinite Mercy, to reveal it to us; I might alſo conſider the Authority, upon which our Duty is founded: But as theſe are Subjects ſomething foreign to our preſent Meeting, I'll apply my ſelf particularly to conſider the excellent Duty of Juſtice, contained in theſe Words, *To do juſtly*. And in treating upon theſe few, but comprehenſive Words, I will obſerve this Method.

Firſt, I will ſhew you the Meaning of the Phraſe, *Do Juſtly*.

Secondly, I will conſider Juſtice, as 'tis Twofold, either Univerſal, or Particular. And,

And, *Thirdly*, I will give you ſeveral Reaſons, to inforce the Practice of this Duty.

Firſt, I am to ſhew you the Meaning of the Phraſe, *Do juſtly*. And what it is, the very firſt Notion of the Word does evidence, namely, To do to others, as we would expect from their Hands, were they in the ſame Condition with our ſelves. To take the Meaſure of Juſtice from our ſelves, and ſo deal out, and diſtribute it to others, as we expect ſhould be done to us. And, therefore, the *Septuagint* renders it, Ποιεῖν κρίμα, *To do Judgment*. To paſs Judgment is the Act of a Judge, whoſe Property it is to give to every one his Due, to divide to every Man his Right, and Poſſeſſion, that he may not be deprived of that, which he is lawful Poſſeſſor of. And thus every Man is, as it were, conſtituted a Judge between himſelf and others, to diſtribute to every Man according to thoſe juſt Proportions, as he expects, ſhould be done to him. He has a Court of Judicature in his own Breaſt, wherein he has the Rule of Righte-

Righteouſneſs, as his Law, and his Conſcience as a Thouſand Witneſſes in all his Proceedings: So that there is no Act of Injuſtice committed, but the firſt Accuſation, that is raiſed againſt him, is from his own Breaſt; and, though it may paſs away, as indiſcernible from the World, yet it cannot be hid from God's Omniſcience, nor his own Conſcience: So that to do Judgment, is the ſame as to do Juſtly, to act with Sincerity, and Uprightneſs, according to the Dictates of a regulated Conſcience. And 'tis very familiar in Scripture, to joyn Juſtice and Judgment together, and they are often uſed as ſynonymous Words. *Shall I hide from* Abraham *the Thing which I do*, ſays God, *Gen.* xviii. 17, 19. *For I know, that he will command his Children, and his Houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep the Way of the Lord, to do Juſtice, and Judgment.* And, ſays *Solomon*, Prov. xxi. 3. *To do Juſtice, and Judgment, is more acceptable to the Lord, than Sacrifice.* And when God promiſed the *Meſſiah*, he thus ſpeaks by the Evangelical Prophet, *Behold, my Servant, whom I uphold, mine Elect, in whom my Soul delighteth. I have put my Spirit upon him,*

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he ſhall bring forth Judgment to the Gentiles, Iſaiah xlii. 1. He ſhall ſet up that Rule of Righteouſneſs, that Sincere, and Evangelical Righteouſneſs, in the whole World, which every Man ought to conform himſelf to, and by which he ſhall be judged at the laſt Day: Which brings me to my Second Particular; To conſider,

Secondly, Juſtice, as 'tis Twofold, either Univerſal, or Particular. And,

Firſt, Of Univerſal Juſtice; which, the * Orator tells us, is the moſt excellent of all Virtues, as comprehending in it the Excellency of all Morality: And an old † Poet deſcribes it almoſt in the ſame Manner;

Ἐν δὲ δικαιοσύνῃ συλλήβδην πᾶσ' ἀρετ ἔϛι.

And Chriſtianity does in no wiſe differ from this Notion, Righteouſneſs being the prime Title of the Chriſtian Virtues, where

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* Pietate ſublatâ, fides etiam, & Societas humani generis, & una excellentiſſima virtus Juſtitia tollitur. *Cic. Lib.* 1. *de Nat. Deor.*

† Theognes.

every

every Virtue is, as a Star, to make up the fuller Brightneſs of the Conſtellation of Juſtice. And this is comprehended in this Precept, (*To do Juſtly*) That we uſe our beſt Endeavours, with Sincerity, and Uprightneſs, to fulfil that Evangelical Righteouſneſs that is ſet before us; every Duty, and Precept of Chriſt, being as a Branch of this Holy Root. For every Command is ratified by the ſame Authority, and derived to us by the ſame Lawgiver. They have all the ſame Stamp, and Effigies upon them, and challenge from us their due Reverence, and Obſervance: *For whoever ſhall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one Point, is guilty of all. For he that ſaid, Do not commit Adultery, ſaid alſo, Do not Kill,* James ii. 10, 11. It is the ſame Authority, that forbids the one, as well as the other, and therefore, though thou doſt not the one, yet, if thou doſt the other, thou ſinneſt againſt the Authority of both. Partial Obedience is but the Sign of Unſoundneſs, and ſprings from a corrupt Heart: 'Tis like a Man, that is ſound in Body in almoſt every Part, but, if his Lungs are faulty, or a Gangrene has ſeized on any

Member, the Body will ſoon waſte, and conſume, to the imminent Danger of the Whole. The true Nature of this univerſal Juſtice requires a Uniformity in all our Actions. For as it binds *our* Hands from invading our Neighbour's Poſſeſſion, ſo it ties *his* Hands from Violence, and his Heart from Envy. It reſtrains the corrupt Inclinations from Luſt, and Filthineſs, and ſeals up the Lips from Slander, and Detraction. It carries the Soul with an equal Moderation in every Point of Chriſtian Morality; it contracts all the Chriſtian Virtues in a united Force, and joins them together in the Unity of the Spirit, and Bond of Peace. But,

Secondly, Let us now conſider particular Juſtice: And this conſiſts in Contracts, and Commutations, in the Diſtribution of Rewards and Puniſhments: The firſt concerns every Man; the other is the Right of thoſe, in whom the Government of Nations is inveſted; or, as the * Civilians

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* Juſtinian. Inſtit. in initio. Juſtitia eſt conſtans & perpetua voluntas ſuum cuiq; tribuendi.

define it, Juſtice is a conſtant and perpetual Will, to give to every Man his juſt and proper Right. From hence then is baniſh'd all Fraud, and Oppreſſion, all Violence, and Corruption, as the Stains, and Blemiſhes, that obſcure the Beauty, and Luſtre of Juſtice. This is the Law of Nature, of Nations, and of Chriſt, and all with one Voice, challenge this Duty, from Men: And though the Law of Chriſt commands us, That, when we are ſued *for the inward Garment*, rather, than meditate Revenge, *we ſhould part with the Cloak alſo*; yet no Law, either of God, or Nature, permits Men ſo to do. For whatever is a Man's Right; either by Inheritance, or Purchaſe, by Election, or Donation, of that he is the true Proprietor, the lawful Poſſeſſor: And this he is allow'd to be, not only by Men, and the Laws of publick Societies, but alſo by God himſelf, who has ſet his Seal to it, which cannot be broke up, without incurring the Guilt of Rapine, and Oppreſſion. And thus St. *Paul*, when he vindicated himſelf from thoſe Reproaches, that were caſt upon him by the Gnoſtick Profeſſors, and the

grand Enemy of Chriſtianity, calls the *Theſſalonians* to witneſs, ſaying, *Ye are Witneſſes, and God alſo, how holily, and juſtly, and unblameably we behaved our ſelves among you that believe*, 1 Theſſ. ii. 10. *How holily*, in relation to God; *how juſtly*, in reſpect to Men; *How unblameably*, in reſpect of himſelf and perſonal Converſation. And thus you ſee, we cannot account our ſelves Holy, unleſs we are Juſt too: So mutually go they link'd together, that, like *Hippocrates*'s Twins, they ſpeak, and live, and dye together.

And now, in a few Words, I have pointed out to you the Nature of Juſtice: And, in the *Third*, and laſt Place, I proceed, to give you ſeveral Reaſons, to inforce the Practice of it.

And *Firſt*, Do Juſtice, for its own ſake. For there is no Virtue more agreeable to the Nature of Man, none more beneficial to Mankind; ſo that there are few of ſuch debauched Principles, but muſt honour it at the Time, that they pervert it; and even Injuſtice it ſelf has ſtill ſome ſeeming Pretence to cover its Fraud, and

ſhroud

ſhroud it ſelf under its Patronage: So great is its Excellency, that it even gains a Teſtimony from an Adverſary. Juſtice has its Original before all Law, but that of Nature, being firſt implanted in the Minds of Men. 'Tis that νόμος ἄγραφος, that unwritten Law, which the Dictates of right Reaſon ſuggeſted to him. There was indeed a Generation of Men ſome Ages ſince, and, alas! not long ago ſprang up again, that are of Opinion, That there is nothing either Good, or Evil, but according to the Eſtimation of Men, * that there is nothing in the Nature of Things, which makes them differ, but that they receive their Difference from Cuſtom, and poſitive Laws. An Opinion, ſo wild, ſo unfit to be entertained in the Thoughts of rational Creatures, that it rather deſerves to be branded with the Marks of Infamy, than confuted with ſerious Reaſon, and Argument. For if Virtue and Vice be indifferent in themſelves, whence, I pray, comes that univerſal Deſire in all

* Μηδὲν εἶναι φύσει δίκαιον, ἢ αἰσχρὸν, ἀλλὰ νόμῳ καὶ ἔθει. Vide Laertium de Vit. Philoſ. & vide Hobbeſium de Cive.

Men,

Men, to appear, if not really, yet ſeemingly honeſt? Why ſhould Men love and affect the one rather than the other, was there not ſome real Worth in the one, whilſt the other is blaſted with Marks of Hatred, and Diſgrace? Why are the Minds of Men diſquieted with painful Agitations, with the Terrors and Vexations of Conſcience upon the Commiſſion of Evil? This Univerſality cannot ariſe from any other Cuſtom, but the very Impreſſions of Nature, which proclaim aloud, that vaſt Difference there is between the Beauty of the one, and the Deformity of the other. And 'tis a Rule in the Law, * *Non ut ex regulâ jus ſumatur, ſed ex jure, quod eſt, regula fiat.* That natural Right is not taken from the Law, but the Law ariſes from Right, to ſtrengthen and confirm it to the lawful Poſſeſſors. For poſitive Laws are but Subſidiaries to Juſtice, to defend its Frontiers from the Invaſion of unreaſonable Men.

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* Digeſt. Lib. L. Tit. 17.

Secondly,

Secondly, *Do juſtly*, For herein conſiſts the Good of Human Societies. For, unleſs Juſtice is obſerved amongſt Men, they are no longer publick Societies, but a diſtracted Multitude. And therefore, God Almighty, conſidering the Good of Mankind, has given us this Royal Law, as an eternal Obligation. For when Injuſtice lords, and triumphs, what are a Multitude of Men, but as ſo many Fiſh, where the leſſer are a Prey to the greater?

Men are made for Society, for mutual Converſe, and Comfort, where every Man contributes his Aſſiſtance to promote the publick Good. As in arched Buildings, every Stone contributes to the Support of the whole, and its Strength is eſtabliſhed by its own Weight: So in the Building up of Humane Societies, the Cement is always Juſtice; 'Tis that, which knits the Parts together in a uniform Beauty, and Concord. For ſhould any Man for private Intereſt make a Breach upon the Laws, which are the Fences of Juſtice, he opens a Gap, which may let in Miſchief as well upon his own Eſtate, as that of

of another's. For, as a Writer obſerves, * *Quiſquis violat leges, non unum civem lædit, ſed totam Rem-publicam, quod quidem in ipſo eſt.* Thus he who breaks the Law for preſent Intereſt, or Profit, violates that, wherein his own, and that of Poſterity is preſerved. For the private is not diſtinguiſhed from the Publick, but included in it.

Thirdly, *Do juſtly*; Becauſe there is a natural Conſanguinity among all Men. We have one common Father, and we take our Original from one, and the ſame Stock, and therefore the more oblig'd to mutual Juſtice. For as the ſuper-eminent Excellency of God is the Foundation of that Honour, we render to his Name; ſo that natural Conſanguinity, that is in us, as we are Men, and Fellow-Citizens of the World, conciliates and contracts many Obligations one towards another, and our Equality is the Foundation of Juſtice. This was well known to the Heathens, who deem'd the World, as a common City, and the ſeveral Nations, as ſo many

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* Eraſm. Apophtheg.

Quarters

Quarters of the ſame Town. And therefore *Socrates*, when he was baniſhed, being asked, What City he was of? replied, He was *Mundanus*, a Citizen of the World; every Man being his Neighbour, and challenging the Right of Juſtice from him. But, methinks, as we are Chriſtians, there's a nearer Union, and as we are Members of the ſame Body (the Church) how unreaſonable is it, That one Member ſhould injure another. 'Tis obſerved, That in the Body, that Part, which offers greateſt Violence to the others, is not any ſubſtantial Member, but an Excrement: So indeed it is in the Body Politick, the Perſons who live by Rapine and Spoil, Violence and Oppreſſion, are not to be accounted as Members, but Excrements; and therefore fit for Exciſion. For true Memberſhip is the mutual Comfort and Support of each other. *Do good unto all Men, eſpecially to them, who are of the Houſehold of Faith*, Gal. vi. 10. And if our Charity is to be univerſal, much more our Juſtice; for this we cannot hold back, without depriving him of that Right, which God has inveſted him with. And

therefore, whoever are intruſted with the Adminiſtration of Juſtice, when Suitors apply themſelves to them, to defend them from Wrong, or recover to them their own, they ſhould be very cautious, leſt, under a Pretence of Mercy, the injured Perſon has not all his own reſtored, but the Aggreſſor retains ſomething, that properly belongs not to him. Such an Award would be accounted an unmerciful Act, and the Perſon ſo acting, an unrighteous Judge.

Laſtly, Do juſtly, for theſe bleſſed Fruits and Effects it produces: *The Work of Righteouſneſs ſhall be Peace, and the Effect of Righteouſneſs, Quietneſs and Aſſurance for ever,* Iſai. xxxii. 17. Juſtice introduces ſuch a Concord in the Minds of Men, that, like a well-tun'd Inſtrument, they conſent in a delightful Harmony. Every one ſits under his own Vine, and under his own Fig-tree, and praiſes the Name of the Lord his God. But what Peace, what Quiet could there be among a People, if, by Injuſtice, and unlawful Incroachments, Men ſhould, like *Ahab*, ſpoil *Naboth* of his Vineyard? Hence ariſes that Envy, and Malice,

Malice, thoſe deſperate Animoſities, and Diſcords, which firſt begin in leſſer Families, but often overwhelm whole Cities in Tumults, and Faction: Like Fire, which firſt breaks out in a ſmall Cottage, but often buries a populous City in its own Aſhes. And therefore St. *James* puts this Queſtion, Chap. iv. 1. *From whence come Wars, and Fightings among you?* and anſwers it in the following Words, *Come they not hence, Even of your Luſts, which war in your Members?* Theſe are the irregular Heats, firſt kindled within, which often break out into deſtructive Flames. Thus all that Miſery, which befel the *Græcian* Empire, firſt took its Original from Injuſtice, and Ambition. Men of haughty Spirits, not caring by what unjuſt Means they could raiſe themſelves into the Throne, brought that famous Empire, the Glory of *Chriſtendom*, to become a Prey to *Turks* and Infidels. But when Juſtice has ſuch an Influence upon the Minds of Men, as to reſtrain them from Enormities, then is a People like a River kept within its own Banks, that gently glides along the pleaſant Meads: But when 'tis ſwell'd

with immoderate Rains, it then comes on like a Torrent, overflows the Lands, and lays waſte whatever oppoſes its Rapidity. And ſuch is the Nature of Injuſtice; it cannot be held in proper Bounds, for it has none. It ſoon ſubverts the beſt fram'd Common-wealth, when there is no Reſtraint to ſuppreſs its dangerous Malignity: But, on the contrary, how honourable and lovely is Juſtice? It produces a bleſſed Iſſue, a beautiful Off-ſpring, Peace with our Neighbours, and Peace in our own Breaſts: *The Fruit of Righteouſneſs is ſown in Peace of them, that make Peace*, Jam. iii 18. By this is God glorified, and the Church of Chriſt advanced upon the Pillars of Righteouſneſs, and Truth. By this Arts flouriſh, and Property is maintained: By this Innocence and Virtue are had in Honour, Vice and Knavery diſcountenanced, and abaſh'd. And when there *is no breaking in* by hoſtile Invaſions, *nor any complaining in our Streets*, then ſurely *happy are the People, that are in ſuch a Caſe, yea, Bleſſed is the People, whoſe God is the Lord*, Pſal. cxliv. 14, 15.

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I have now (conſidering the great Buſineſs of the Day) diſpatched, with all Brevity, what I at firſt propoſed, and ſhall conclude with this ſhort Inference from the whole.

Since there is ſuch a Lovelineſs in the Practice of Juſtice; ſince the Good of all Men is concerned in it; ſince there is a natural Obligation upon us to its Exerciſe, and its bleſſed Fruits are Peace; but, above all, ſince the Lord requires of us, *to do juſtly*;

Let us uſe our beſt Endeavours to be juſt and righteous with Men, with that Sincerity, and Uprightneſs, that we may approve our ſelves in the Sight of God. Let us be aſhamed to harbour the leaſt tricking Thoughts in our Minds, but be plain and open. For whatever Men pretend, were we but equally honeſt, we ſhould be wiſe enough for one another. And be ſure to remember, That Policy void of Honeſty, is great Iniquity. Let us be juſt then, as our own Good is concerned in it, and not only ours in particular, but all Mankind take a Part. We are all Members of the ſame Body, and

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are obliged mutually to contribute to the Support of one another, and much more by rendering to every one that, which is his juſt Right, and Property. And therefore this is not the Duty of the Magiſtrate only, but of every Man. It is indeed his Duty to ſee it put in Execution, but it is every Man's Duty to put it in Practice. From the Prince that ſits upon the Throne, to the meaneſt Peaſant, *All Things, that ye would that Men ſhould do unto you, even ſo do unto them.* This is the univerſal, the ſtanding Law, ratified from Mount *Sinai*, and confirmed to us from our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount. 'Tis an eternal Obligation never to be cancelled, never to be repealed. Let us then labour to acquit our Selves, and ſatisfy that Obligation, which lies upon us, by renouncing the hidden Things of Diſhoneſty, *by walking honeſtly as in the Day, as we are Members of the Body of Chriſt, and as we are Members one of another.*

FINIS.